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### Survey of Political Trends in the Near East, 1926

THE countries of the Near and Middle East have long commanded the interest of the western world because of the position they occupy between five great seas that are highways of trade in the Eastern Hemisphere—the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. Here European nations have important political and economic interests, for the safeguarding of which they are constrained to follow with almost equal attention annual developments in countries so diverse as Turkey and Palestine, Persia and Yemen, Egypt and Iraq. A quarter of a million square miles are under the mandatory control of Great Britain and France, who thus have an intimate share in ordering the civil life of something over seven million people in Syria, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. In Egypt, a country of 350,000 square miles and twelve and three quarter million inhabitants, British influence is still predominant, though theoretically at least on the wane. In Arabia, whose area equals one-third that of the United States, British and Italian influences have been penetrating by way of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Only in

Turkey, where a population of perhaps eight million people occupies half a million square miles of territory, has the extension of foreign political and economic control been jealously obstructed. Even here the practical necessity of some form of closer cooperation with European governments and European capital is being realized, although nowhere has the principle of cooperation yet led to a relinquishment of the principle of absolute Turkish sovereignty.

Passing in review the events that have occurred in the Near East during the year just closed, it becomes apparent that not all its important developments have centered about the more sensational news items that have appeared from time to time in the press. Exceptions may be made in the case of Syria, where the course of the rebellion and the economic depression resulting from a continued state of upheaval have attracted wide attention, and in Egypt, where the struggles of British and nationalist interests respectively to retain and to gain the whip hand in public affairs were vital as well as spectacular. In Turkey also the notorious at-

tempt on the life of the President, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, had repercussions on the organization of political life that may readily come to exercise a determining influence in the evolution of the nation itself. But for the most part it is the less spectacular forces at work in the Near East that may be expected ultimately to bring about the most revolutionary changes.

It may suffice to mention only a few typical evidences of the existence of these quieter forces—evidences taken at random from the various countries concerned. Each opens up possibilities of far-reaching social, economic or political change. During the year, new long-distance air routes were opened up to the general public across the Near and the Middle East. One of a series of outstanding Anglo-Egyptian disputes was peaceably settled in Egypt's favor. An annual Islamic Congress was inaugurated at Mecca. Arabs of Iraq and Kurds of Mosul have been receiving a steady education in the art of democratic self-government. The Assyrian Christians have failed to recover the

ancestral lands from which they were driven during the war and have settled down in various sections of northern Mosul, where they are forming a racial and religious minority with whose protection the Arab government of Iraq will be charged upon the expiry of the present British mandate. Foreign experts arrived in Persia during the year to study plans for constructing a railroad from Teheran to the Persian Gulf, foreshadowing the loss to Iraq of a large share of the carrying trade it has enjoyed between Persia and the countries of the west. Zionists have persisted in their attempts to make Hebrew in fact as well as in theory one of the three official languages of Palestine. Pan-Arab sentiment has still persisted in certain circles of the Middle East. There has been a silent converging of rival Arab and foreign interests upon the southwestern corner of the Arabian peninsula. These and a number of other items constitute formidable proof that the Near East is undergoing a rapid internal development, the results of which can only become apparent with the passing of time.

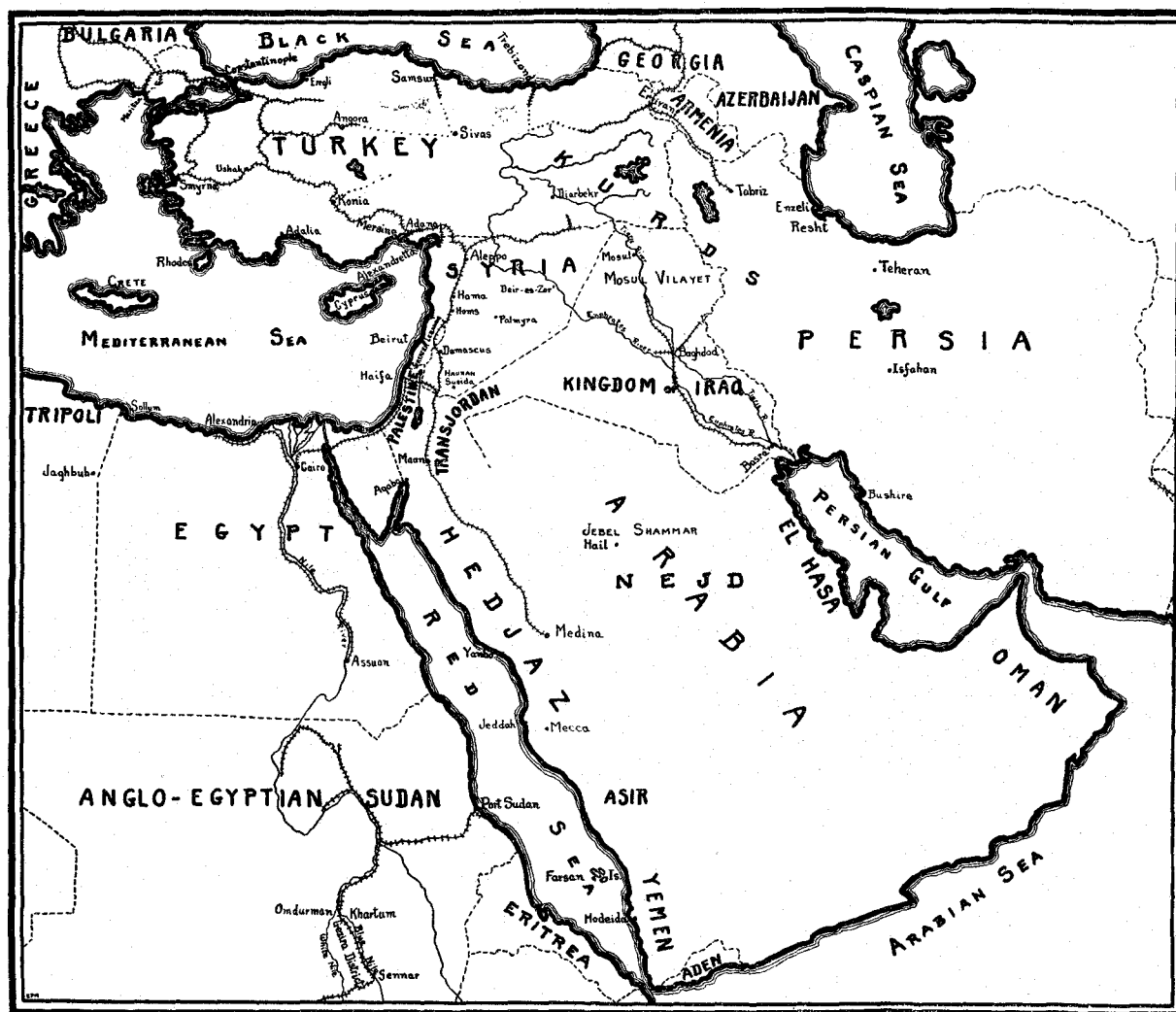
### EGYPT IN TRANSITION

In Egypt the early part of the year saw a return to parliamentary government, which had been in abeyance since March, 1925. At that time the Unionist Premier, Ziwar Pasha, backed by the British High Commissioner, had strangled opposition by securing immediate dissolution of a newly-elected Assembly in which the Premier was faced by a hostile majority of his Nationalist opponents. The story of the struggle which accompanied the restoration of representative government in Egypt in 1926 is illustrative of the effective control Great Britain has continued to exercise over the domestic affairs of that country since the abolition of the Protectorate.\*

\* The basis for continued control is found in certain reservations which accompanied the Milner Agreement of February, 1922, granting nominal independence to Egypt. The following matters were absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government until such time as it might be possible by free discussion and friendly accommodation on both sides to conclude agreements in regard thereto:

- (a) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt;
- (b) The defense of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect;
- (c) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities;
- (d) The Sudan.

It was the British authorities who in effect had appointed Ziwar Pasha to office in November 1924, at the time of the crisis following the murder of Sir Lee Stack, and it was British support which made possible his continuance in office until June 1926. But the protracted period of government without Parliament cost Ziwar Pasha the support of his political allies, the Liberals, and many of his own followers, the Unionists. The Liberals gravitated toward the Nationalists and Wafdists (extreme nationalist supporters of Zaghlul Pasha) who were clamoring for an immediate election or the reconvening of the last Parliament whose dissolution they regarded as illegal. Ziwar Pasha was aware of his weakened position, but it was not until February 1926, on the eve of a so-called "National Congress" convened to protest once more against the suspension of constitutional government, that he finally capitulated. He acknowledged the defeat of his own program by announcing a May election on the basis of the Zaghlulist electoral law of 1924—i. e., by manhood suffrage—rather than on the basis of his own



Prepared by the Foreign Policy Association.

## THE NEAR EAST

electoral decree of 1925, which would have restricted the suffrage to the educated and property-holding classes from among whom his own supporters had chiefly been drawn.

Three parties—the Wafdists, the Nationalists and the Liberals—agreed to cooperate in the May election against the Unionist party of Ziwar Pasha. In spite of certain difficulties experienced in establishing a basis of cooperation, the Coalition held together and early returns on May 24 showed that only four out of sixty Unionist candidates had secured election. The Wafdists were in the overwhelming majority, having

secured three quarters of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, exclusive of the seats held by their allies, the Liberals and the Nationalists.

There ensued a fortnight of political anxiety more serious than anything Egypt had experienced since the murder of Sir Lee Stack in November, 1924. At that time Great Britain had issued a severe ultimatum to Egypt, seized the custom house at Alexandria and forced the resignation of Zaghlul Pasha whom it held morally responsible for a series of political murders culminating in the Stack assassination.

This time the struggle centered about the premiership. Would Great Britain permit the return to office of a man with whom the High Commissioner was not yet on speaking terms? Or would it resort once more to the expedient of dissolution to prevent Zaghlul Pasha from carrying out the mandate he had freshly received from the Egyptian people?

It was the purpose of Lord Lloyd, the British High Commissioner, to accomplish the installation of a new Cabinet in which Liberal rather than Wafdist ministers would exercise a major influence. To this end he hoped to exclude Zaghlul Pasha from the premiership and to secure Liberal Ministers for the key positions on the Cabinet. But for a while no definite action was taken, as the leaders of the three Coalition parties, Zaghlul Pasha, Adly Pasha Yeghen and Sarwat Pasha, were experiencing some difficulty in coming to an agreement as to the distribution of portfolios. For a few days there was nothing but uncertainty as to the outcome of negotiations within the Coalition.

#### THE BRITISH THREAT TO THE NATIONALISTS

On May 25 the issue was joined between Great Britain and Egypt when six out of seven prominent Zaghlulists accused of complicity in a series of four political murders and two attempted murders were acquitted by the Assize Court and released. The verdict was generally acclaimed by the people, who interpreted it as a vindication of the former Zaghlul régime. Judge Kershaw, whose opinion had been over-ruled by his two Egyptian associates at the trial, resigned a few days later in protest against what he denounced as a miscarriage of justice.

Zaghlul Pasha regarded Judge Kershaw's action as an intimation that the British Government would attempt to force his hand. Up to this moment he had not been unwilling that his Liberal colleague, Adly Pasha Yeghen should assume the premiership. But now, declaring that he would accept dictation from no one, he asserted that he would assume the premiership himself. He had an interview with the High Commissioner, in which he is reported to have described his attitude as one of opposition to continued Brit-

ish domination in Egypt. But it is said that he also declared his readiness to enter into friendly discussion of the British reservations of February 1922 with a view to clarifying Anglo-Egyptian relations. Lord Lloyd is reported to have intimated that the British Government would not view with favor a resumption of the premiership by Zaghlul Pasha.

The British Government at this juncture dispatched a note to the Egyptian Government declining to accept the acquittal of the six Zaghlulists as proof of the innocence of the persons concerned and reserving full liberty to take steps to insure the safety of foreigners in Egypt. A battleship was dispatched from Malta to Egypt.

The threat was sufficient to force a change of front in Egypt. The Wafdist party, fearing another dissolution and the consequent loss of its present opportunity to control the government, solved the difficulty itself by requesting Zaghlul Pasha to renounce his claim to the Premiership in favor of Adly Pasha Yeghen, the Liberal leader. This was done. On June 7 the former Premier, Ziwar Pasha, resigned and Adly Pasha Yeghen entered upon a term of office with a Cabinet two-thirds of whose members were Zaghlulists. Liberals were assigned the three most important portfolios of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Communications. Lord Lloyd's purpose was therefore accomplished.

#### PROGRAM OF THE COALITION

On June 10 Parliament was opened. The Speech from the Throne foreshadowed the consolidation of constitutional government, the abolition of patronage, the expansion of the system of public education, especially secondary, technical and higher education, the promotion of a public health program, the reorganization of the customs system, and the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the cotton crop. Steps would be taken to secure Egypt's admission to membership in the League of Nations. "The Government particularly concerns itself," the speech continued, "to establish between the British and Egyptian nations and their respective Governments mutual confidence and cordial relations and to prepare an atmos-



phere of good understanding which will permit Egypt to enjoy complete independence."

None of the disturbances anticipated by the British authorities and foreigners resident in Egypt, as a result of the Wafdist victory, have as a matter of fact taken place. There has been no violent outbreak of anti-foreign feeling. One of the first acts of the Departmental Committee of the Egyptian Government was to recommend the adoption of a report on the regulation of the Nile water supply which settled one of the outstanding disputes between Great Britain and Egypt. The report recommended the following principles: The natural flow of the river must be preserved for Egypt from January 19 to July 15, subject only to small existing pumping rights in the Sudan. On July 16 the Gezireh Canal which is fed by the Sennar Dam (Sudan) may begin to draw on the Nile's natural flow, if the river is at normal level. The Sennar reservoir is to be filled in November. Rights of established irrigation must be fully provided for before any further extension of Sudan irrigation is undertaken. The agreement should be reviewed from time to time.

The decision to adopt this report effectively dispelled the anxiety which had existed in Egypt ever since the British threat, following the Stack murder, of diverting whatever amount of water might be necessary for the extension of the Gezireh irrigation area in the Sudan.

In spite of the moderate policy of the new government indications were not lacking that the tension between it and the Baldwin government was not altogether relaxed. In July a second note was presented to Egypt on the subject of Judge Kershaw's declaration, protesting against the manner in which his resignation had been received in Egypt.

In August the Egyptian Government decided not to grant credits for the Jebel Aulia irrigation scheme promoted by British authorities in the Sudan, announcing that it would support instead a scheme for raising the Assuan Dam in Egypt so that there would be no export of Egyptian capital to the Sudan. About the same time it became known that Sir Austen Chamberlain's opposition would prevent Egypt from applying at an early date for membership in the League of Nations. Nothing has yet been done to reach an agreement upon the original reservations limiting Egyptian independence. (See note p. 319)

A severe economic crisis in the latter part of the year completely overshadowed the political excitement of earlier months. A slump in world cotton prices affected the whole country disastrously, causing successive bankruptcies and a twenty per cent reduction in trade. For the first time in years an unfavorable trade balance was reported. In December the Chamber of Deputies adopted a bill limiting cotton acreage to one-third of normal for a period of three years. A scheme to support prices by advancing \$20,000,000 to enable small growers to make payments without liquidating their stock did not adequately meet the crisis. The Government accordingly was forced with some reluctance to intervene in the cotton market, confining its buying to futures for the time being.

The Cairo-Karachi air route was formally opened in December, inaugurating a regular fortnightly passenger service to India. Earlier in the year four Royal Air Force machines made a flight to and from Cape Town, in preparation for the ultimate inauguration of regular passenger air service between Egypt and South Africa.

## THE GROWING POWER OF IBN SAUD IN ARABIA

### I. THE HEDJAZ

Since the Great War, when Arabia was freed from Ottoman control, it has undergone a series of internal political changes. Rival rulers in countries fringing the great desert have made war on each other for the possession of coveted territory, and tribal chieftains of the interior resumed periodic raids which had been interrupted during the

war. By far the most spectacular conflict was that which arose in 1924 between Great Britain's protégé, the King of the Hedjaz—whose territory faces Egypt across the Red Sea—and the Sultan of the vast interior country called Nejd. Sultan Ibn Saud fell upon the cities of the Hedjaz with his desert army of puritanical Wahabite followers and during the course of the year

1925 effected a conquest of the entire country. He drove out the family of Hedjazi kings who had enjoyed British subsidies at Mecca since the war but had not received enough British support in the 1925 campaigns to repel the Wahabite invaders.

On January 11, 1926, the crown of the Hedjaz formally passed from the Hashimite King Ali, son of King Hussein, Sherif of Mecca, to the Sultan of the Nedj, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. The two-year offensive of the Wahabite ruler against the kings of the Hedjaz had been motivated, Ibn Saud declared, by his determination to rid Islam's birthplace of a corrupt administration under which un-Moslem practices were tolerated if not encouraged. Bribery, extortion, highway robbery, immorality and grave-worship, he said, had flourished under the former régime. He promised to destroy these and to establish a régime more strictly in accordance with the requirements of Islam.

#### IBN SAUD'S HEDJAZ POLICY

Ibn Saud's immediate duties toward the newly-acquired kingdom were to define the limits of his jurisdiction and to restore public order. To accomplish the latter purpose he formulated a series of new decrees. Pilgrim fares on the Jeddah-Mecca road were drastically reduced, and protective measures were adopted to safeguard visitors to the holy cities. Laws embodying the puritanical Wahabite moral code were officially promulgated in May, forbidding the use of wine or tobacco throughout the country, and instituting measures against brigandage, extortion and other abuses. Graves and shrines which had latterly become the object of worship by pilgrims were either demolished or walled about so that semi-idolatrous practices were prevented.

The new régime in the Hedjaz raised questions of policy, particularly in respect of the annual pilgrimage, which were of interest to Moslems in all parts of the world. To discuss these questions Ibn Saud invited to an All-Moslem Conference at Mecca delegates from many countries, fifty-nine of whom assembled on June 7 in the capital and participated in the first of what was intended to be a series of annual Islamic congresses.

The resolutions adopted by the Islamic Conference provided chiefly for the greater comfort of pilgrims—increasing the Mecca water supply through the Zubaida Canal, widening important thoroughfares, establishing a more adequate sewage system, providing hospitals and camps for pilgrims and constructing railway lines from Jeddah to Mecca, from Mecca to Medina and Medina to Yanbo, making the holy cities much more readily accessible to their foreign visitors. Regulations were formulated to govern pilgrimages so that they should no longer be marred by the disorders which frequently occurred before the sacred tombs. Ibn Saud was requested to appoint special police to enforce these regulations during the pilgrimage season. Voluntary contributions were pledged by the delegates to aid in effecting the improvements they had envisaged.

Late in the year Ibn Saud promulgated a constitution for the Hedjaz, proclaiming it a sovereign, consultative, Moslem monarchy under the immediate rule of a Viceroy (at present the Prince Feisal, Ibn Saud's second son). A Grand Council, composed of the Viceroy and the chiefs of the state services and six nominees of the King, was to determine public policies, subject to ratification by the King. Medina and Jeddah were to enjoy a certain degree of self-government.

Within the Hedjaz the year thus saw a consolidation of Ibn Saud's authority. This was accomplished not without irritation on the part of the Hedjazis, to whom the reforming zeal of the Wahabite desert-dwellers of the Nejd was not as welcome as the greater security they now enjoyed. They resented the imposition upon them of the tenets of another Moslem sect, whose viewpoint differed from their own much as the viewpoint of the Puritan has differed from that of the Protestant Episcopalian in the Christian world.

#### HEDJAZ BOUNDARY AGREEMENT DELAYED

The year closed without definite agreement as to the territorial limits of Ibn Saud's jurisdiction. On the south he extended his influence into the country of Asir, over which in October he established a protectorate by the Treaty of Mecca, reserving the right to regulate Asir's foreign policies. On

the north he was determined to gain possession of the port of Aqaba and the inland town of Maan which had been included by Great Britain in the mandated territory of Transjordan. Toward the end of the year Ibn Saud entered into negotiations with Great Britain upon this subject. The tone of the Conservative press made it appear probable that the British authorities would not only restore the Maan-Aqaba territory to the Hedjaz but that it would also agree to a liberal settlement of the question of the Hedjaz Railway management as a means of consolidating friendship between themselves and Ibn Saud. But Ibn Saud's demands proved to be wider than the British representative was empowered to meet and negotiations were interrupted at the end of the year to permit the British envoy to return to London for consultation with his government.

## II. YEMEN

Ibn Saud was not the only Arab leader with whom Great Britain was in negotiation during the year. An emissary was dispatched also to Yemen, the south-western corner of Arabia, to negotiate an agreement with its ruler, the Imam Yehia, to regulate trade, to establish the boundaries of his Imamate, and to define his relationship to the British-controlled territory of Aden, which adjoins Yemen on the southeast. The British representative failed, however, in his mission. Instead the Imam Yehia entered

into treaty relations with Italy, whose colony of Eritrea on the African coast lies directly opposite Yemen. By this treaty Italy recognized the absolute independence of Yemen and undertook not to intervene in the affairs of that country in such a manner as to impair its sovereignty. Commerce was to be encouraged between the two countries. The Yemen Government expressed a desire to secure from Italy what it needed in the way of material for its own economic development as well as the technical experts it would require. Italy undertook to supply these needs upon liberal terms. Both countries, however, reserved for themselves full freedom in commercial matters.

The tendency of Ibn Saud to extend his dominion southward and of the Imam Yehia to extend his dominion northward at the expense of Asir caused considerable speculation as to the ultimate relationship of Ibn Saud and the Imam.

The Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company meanwhile, acquired an oil concession in the Farsan Islands, which Great Britain had recognized in 1917 as belonging to Asir. There had thus arisen a complicated situation in which Great Britain was generally regarded as the guardian of Asir's interests and as a possible supporter of Ibn Saud while Italy was characterized as the champion of the Imam Yehia, Ibn Saud's only formidable rival in the Arabian peninsula.

## PROBLEMS OF ADMINISTRATION IN PALESTINE

The efforts of diverse groups in Palestine to influence the administration in favor of their respective policies, and the attempt of the British mandatory Power to pursue a conciliatory middle course, fill the annals of 1926. The main conflict between the long-established Arab inhabitants of Palestine and the newly-established Jewish inhabitants has precipitated a number of problems of organization and administration which occupied the attention of the public and were discussed at the June meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva.

Problems of organization affect the national government, the government of muni-

cipalities and the status of religious communities. The national government on account of the refusal of the Arabs to participate in national political life has not yet been established on a representative basis. It will retain its provisional form as long as the Arabs adhere to their policy of passive resistance to the British mandate, which is opposed among other reasons because it involves endorsement of the Balfour Declaration in support of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Rumors were rife in May that an All-Palestine Moslem Congress was about to be held for the purpose of uniting various Moslem groups and



inaugurating a common political program. But the Congress did not convene, and the boycott of political action has not been formally withdrawn.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEMOCRATIZED

In the municipalities there was complaint especially from Jewish Palestinian citizens that democratic institutions had been too long delayed. In the majority of towns and villages the mayors and reeves had been appointed by the British authorities instead of being elected by the inhabitants, as was the custom under the former Turkish régime. The British authorities explained that this policy had been adopted to avoid strife in localities where the population was divided in nationality and religion, but that elections had been instituted wherever local animosities were not too bitter. In December, however, a Municipal Franchise Law was published establishing democratic local control. The new law gave to Moslem, Christian and Jewish voters the right to fill a proportionate number of seats on the local Council, thus ensuring a balanced representation and avoiding anomalies such as had existed in Jerusalem, where the Jews who formed fifty-three per cent of the population were represented by two members while the remaining forty-seven per cent was represented by four members. The minimum age for voters was now fixed at 25. In deference to Moslem opinion, women were excluded from the franchise. (In the purely Jewish city of Tel-Aviv, where a representative council already existed, it had been determined in September that women should possess voting rights.)

The status of religious communities was a particularly thorny question, since many of the services provided by municipalities in other countries are regulated in Palestine by the various religious communal organizations. In April a Religious Communities Organization Ordinance became law, permitting any religious community to apply for official recognition as a statutory body, and providing for action on such petitions by the British authorities. The precise regulations governing the various religious communities were yet to be formulated, however.

The religious organizations already recog-

nized in some manner were the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Supreme Moslem Council and the Rabbinical Council. The Vaad Leumi, a lay organization of the Jewish community, was recognized as the spokesman of the whole Jewish population of Palestine and was consulted by the British authorities in matters concerning internal Jewish affairs.\* It was a Council chosen by members of an elected Jewish Assembly. In February such an Assembly convened for the second time in the post-war history of Palestine. It was composed of 170 delegates, including among others 80 Laborites, 19 Yemenite Jews, 17 Spanish Jews, 13 women and 6 Communists. It discussed the position of Jews in Palestine, labor laws, education, and general political questions. Upon the Vaad Leumi, the Council chosen by this Assembly, devolved the duty of representing the policies of the Assembly to the British administrative authorities.

During the year Orthodox Jews petitioned for recognition as an individual religious community. They declared themselves unable to accept the leadership of the Vaad Leumi except in matters which had no bearing whatever on religion. But religion affects secular life in Palestine to such an extent, that only a very narrow margin of authority would actually be recognized by the Orthodox groups as pertaining to the Vaad Leumi. The Orthodox group was relatively so small that it seemed unlikely at the time of the June meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission that the British authorities would grant its request.

Problems of administration in Palestine were numerous and fully as difficult as problems of organization. In the matter of distribution of public lands extensive surveys had to be carried on and the conflicting demands of Arab and Jewish elements considered. Each element accused the British authorities of having favored the other unduly, the Arabs complaining that Jews had been permitted to encroach on lands that

\* The Vaad Leumi was not given official recognition as that "appropriate Jewish agency" described in the terms of the mandate whose function was to be that of "advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine." The organization officially recognized as representative of all Jewry in relation to the Jewish National Home was the Zionist Organization.



were rightfully attributable to Arabs, and the Jews charging that Arabs were being allotted more land than they could cultivate, while incoming Jews were suffering from what amounted to a land famine. Arabs complained that the British authorities were encouraging a much greater Jewish immigration than the country could absorb. At the time of the Armistice there had been 55,000 Jews in Palestine. Immigration had increased after that date until in 1926 there was a total Jewish population of 158,000. In 1924 immigration was 12,856; in 1925 it was 33,801; in 1926 it was approximately 22,000. The Arabs invited the League of Nations to send a neutral commissioner to observe conditions and judge whether this immigration was not excessive. The Zionists on the other hand complained that Great Britain had placed unjustifiable restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine and asked that they be removed.

Among the major grievances of the Jewish inhabitants were the facts that labor legislation was practically non-existent in Palestine, that industry received a much smaller degree of statutory protection under the British than it had under the Ottoman régime and that the British authorities had taken advantage of the substantial voluntary expenditures of the Jewish population on health and educational projects to economize unduly in government departments, devoting state expenditures under these heads almost wholly to the Arab community, with the result that Jewish citizens not only failed to receive aid for their own institutions but were taxed for the support of institutions used exclusively by Arabs. The government appropriation for Jewish schools was increased in 1926, however, from \$15,000 to \$50,000. The total appropriation for education was \$606,890. The remainder of the budget, which totalled \$12,500,000, was apportioned as follows: for public works and payment of loans \$1,538,180; for police and prisons, \$1,614,130; for the Frontier Force, \$886,115. Meanwhile the \$10,000,000 appropriation of the World Zionist Organization for the settlement of Jews in Palestine and the development of the Jewish National Home were as follows: For the purchase and improvement of land, \$2,500,000; for agriculture and colonization, \$2,500,000; for

credits for trade and industrial activities, \$1,500,000; for health projects, \$1,000,000; for education; \$750,000; for technical undertakings, \$500,000; for encouragement of building, \$500,000; for miscellaneous activities, \$750,000.

On December 1 the British House of Commons voted to guarantee a Palestinian loan of \$22,500,000, to be used in discharging Palestine's debt to Great Britain and in promoting railway construction, harbor development and public works.

Palestine has continued to enjoy a satisfactory degree of public security. In April, there was a complete reorganization of the defense forces of the country. All British troops were withdrawn with the exception of some 250 who were retained against any sudden emergency with which the police might be unable to cope. Both the British and Palestinian sections of the Palestine Gendarmerie and an Arab legion were disbanded. Police forces of 2,000 men in Palestine and Transjordan were substituted for the former military forces. In Transjordan a military force was maintained, however, for patrolling the boundary.

#### TRANSJORDAN GOVERNMENT REORGANIZED

In Transjordan preliminary preparations were made during the year toward establishing constitutional government. Various districts were notified to send two notables each to the capital, Amman, to participate in a Constitutional Congress and in drafting an electoral law. Meanwhile the Emir Abdullah carried on a semi-autocratic government under the supervision of the British authorities in Jerusalem who were represented in Amman by six officials. The only political incident of particular note during the year was the forced resignation of the Prime Minister, Riza Pasha er-Rikabi, whose anti-French activities had caused High Commissioner de Jouvenel of Syria to adopt the extreme course of suggesting his dismissal. This took place in June. At the same time the British authorities appointed to responsible posts in Transjordan two Moslem officials of the Palestine Civil Service. One took up the duties of Civil Adviser and the other those of Adviser to the Chief Justice of Transjordan.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ

For Iraq the outstanding event of the year was the winning of *de jure* recognition of its possession of Mosul, the fertile northern province which had been occupied late in 1918 by British forces and administered since that time as an integral part of Iraq pending a formal boundary agreement with Turkey.

Since the cessation of hostilities in Mesopotamia a controversy over the placing of the boundary had been exercising the Turkish, Iraq and British governments as well as the inhabitants of the province of Mosul, whose political allegiance was involved in the decision. For seven years the question remained unsettled. In 1924 the parties to the dispute placed the matter in the hands of the League Council, which dispatched a neutral commission to investigate the situation in Mosul and late in 1925 rendered a decision favorable to Iraq.

SETTLEMENT OF  
MOSUL DISPUTE

The year 1926 began with some anxiety. The Turkish authorities had refused to be bound by the Council decision. Turkish troops had been massed near the Iraq boundary. The Turkish War Council had been in secret session. The British mandatory authorities in Iraq were prepared for a declaration of war at any moment. Conversations early in January between Stanley Baldwin and the Turkish minister in London seemed to have no moderating effect upon the Turkish attitude. On January 10, Tewfik Rushdi Bey, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, summed up his official account of the Geneva proceedings to the Grand National Assembly at Angora by declaring that Turkish sovereignty over Mosul had not been modified in the slightest degree by the League Council's award of the greater part of the province to Iraq. The situation was considered grave.

It will be recalled that the League award was conditional. It was to be effective only if Great Britain would prolong its mandatory relationship with Iraq for twenty-five years and if a certain degree of autonomy were given the Kurdish inhabitants of the country. The British and Iraq Governments proceeded immediately to the fulfillment of

these conditions. Regulations were issued making Kurdish the official language in the Kurdish districts, providing for the appointment of Kurdish officials and formally assuring the autonomy already enjoyed in practice. The existing Anglo-Iraq Treaty, regulating the mutual relations of Iraq and the mandatory Power, was extended to cover a period of twenty-five instead of four years. The new treaty was ratified by the Iraq Parliament on January 18 and by the British House of Commons on February 18. In the Iraq Parliament 58 representatives voted for it, but twenty Nationalists abstained because of the hurried character of the vote. In the British House of Commons, too, there was some opposition. The Labor party attempted to condemn prolongation of the mandatory relationship. But the twenty-five year treaty was actually ratified by 260 votes to 116. In March the League Council, having received proof that its conditions in respect of the Mosul award had been met, formally confirmed its award to Iraq of all the territory south of the "Brussels line," leaving to Turkey only a small and mountainous portion of the former Ottoman province of Mosul.

Turkey, however, still dissented from the League decision. For three months longer private negotiations went on at irregular intervals between Turkish and British officials. Finally on June 6, at a time when Turkey apprehended an Italian attack on its western coast, it found it expedient to conclude a treaty with Iraq and Great Britain, which designated the "Brussels line" as the Turco-Iraq boundary, assured its inviolability, set up a neutral zone seventy-five kilometers in width along the frontier, and provided for a permanent Frontier Commission. A general amnesty was arranged, and Turkey was granted a ten per cent share in all petroleum royalties accruing to Iraq during the next twenty-five years. Less than a fortnight later Turkey sold to Iraq its share in these royalties for the sum of \$2,500,000.

This settlement had an immediate effect upon the economic life of Iraq. Business, which had been stagnant as long as the threat of war continued, now took on a new lease of life. General optimism prevailed as

to the country's future. Another source of irritation was removed when the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, announced that Great Britain would renounce all claims to the \$3,500,000 which Iraq had reluctantly bound itself to pay on account of bridges, irrigation works, roads, telegraphs and telephones constructed and administered in Mesopotamia by the British authorities during the war.

When in November Great Britain submitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission its report on the administration of Iraq for 1923 to 1925, it was able to show that the country was enjoying peace, prosperity and a balanced budget, with the prospect of a steadily increasing degree of practical autonomy.

One of the corollaries of increased independence is an increased degree of Iraqi

responsibility for national defense. A bill providing for compulsory military service was introduced by the Iraq Government in November. It met with considerable opposition from those who believed that voluntary enlistment would be sufficient to meet the need created by the proposed reduction of British troops.

The settlement of the boundary dispute permitted the Turkish Petroleum Company, an international group composed of British, French, Dutch and American companies, to proceed with its surveys in Mosul and to commence the drilling of test wells. Some time would have to elapse, however, before either the Government of Iraq or the shareholders of the Turkish Petroleum Company could begin to enjoy the returns from this venture.

### THE SYRIAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Throughout 1926 Syrian nationalists continued to challenge the French mandatory Power against which rebellion had broken out in July, 1925. Hostilities centered in three districts—Rashaya at the foot of Mount Hermon, some fifty miles from the coast; Damascus, the Syrian capital in the interior; and the Jebel Druse in the south, adjoining the Transjordan boundary.

Near Rashaya there were repeated but relatively unimportant skirmishes in the early part of the year, with some loss of life on both sides. In the Jebel Druse where the rebellion had had its inception more important engagements took place. French troops in a spring offensive captured the capital, Sueida, on April 25. The principal Druse leader, Sultan Pasha al Attrash, and other notables over whose head death sentences hung, subsequently migrated with their followers and their flocks to Transjordan where they settled under British protection. Other Druse families withdrew into the rocky wilderness of the Leja. Still others remained in the Jebel Druse and one after another offered submission to the French.

In the Damascus region opposition was more stubborn. There were repeated incursions of rebel bands into the suburbs of the city, which the French had barricaded and surrounded with barbed wire in Janu-

ary. To dislodge them the French authorities on May 7 bombarded one of the chief suburbs of Damascus, causing the death of some thousand persons. Insurgents repeatedly isolated Damascus by tearing up sections of the railroad. Uneasiness in the city frequently grew to the point of panic. French military authorities petitioned the home government to dispatch reinforcements to aid the 30,000 troops already in Syria, stating that at least 20,000 more would be required to restore order. But the large reinforcements asked for did not arrive. Fighting continued in outlying towns. Fortunes of the combatants varied, but devastation spread steadily in the fields and gardens on which the city dwellers depended for their food supply.

Toward the close of the year fewer engagements were reported.

Meanwhile repeated but unavailing attempts were made by the French authorities and nationalist leaders to arrive at a settlement favorable to their respective policies. The French intention was to induce the rebels to surrender their arms, and then, after receiving their submission, to convoke constituent assemblies in each of the states into which they had divided Syria, proceeding through representative institutions to consolidate government throughout the coun-



try under a liberal interpretation of the terms of the French mandate. The separate states were to enter into close treaty relations with each other. Syria would be unified only to the extent that the separate constituent assemblies or legislative bodies might declare themselves in favor of renouncing independence. Amnesty was to be extended to all rebels with the exception of a few outstanding leaders.

#### FAILURE OF NATIONALIST DEMANDS

The Nationalists, professing to have been tricked too often by the French authorities to trust general promises again, refused to lay down arms until they had secured from the High Commissioner written undertakings to the following effect:

1. General amnesty was to include all who participated in the rebellion.
2. The sovereignty of Syria was to be formally recognized; the constitution was to be based on the principle of national independence; Syria was to enjoy the right to appoint diplomatic representatives to foreign capitals.
3. A treaty between Syria and France should clearly define the mandatory relationship.
4. France was to apply on behalf of Syria at an early date for membership in the League of Nations.
5. Syria was to be unified. There should be restored to it the Syrian territory which the first French High Commissioner bestowed upon the State of Greater Lebanon.
6. French troops should be withdrawn from Syria as rapidly as Syrian troops could be organized to take their place.
7. France should give financial aid in the rehabilitation of devastated areas.

An agreement along the lines proposed by the nationalists was actually drafted at Paris in the latter half of the year, with the tentative approval of M. de Jouvenel and Foreign Minister Briand, upon whom a Syrian delegation was in attendance; but before signatures were affixed the agreement was set aside and negotiations were once more broken off.

Meanwhile various political measures had been adopted in Syria itself in the hope of easing the situation. M. de Jouvenel, appointed to the post of High Commissioner in October, 1925, instituted parliamentary elections in the portions of Syria where martial

law did not then prevail. The Nationalists, contending that it was undesirable to elect an assembly until the main question of Franco-Syrian relations had been settled, boycotted the elections. In a few centers the boycott was completely effective. In other centers from twenty to ninety-five per cent of the electorate registered their votes. But on account of the disturbed state of the country and the incomplete character of the election, the Assembly did not convene.

Meanwhile Sheikh Taj ed Din, President of the Syrian State, had resigned on January 12, following High Commissioner de Jouvenel's refusal to accept his advice. M. Pierre Aylpe was thereupon appointed to carry on a direct French administration until April when, immediately after the French military success at Sueida, High Commissioner de Jouvenel took advantage of his strengthened position to make a liberal gesture by forming a provisional Syrian government under Damad Ahmed Namy Bey. Three nationalist leaders were admitted to the provisional Cabinet. But the demands of the latter for an abatement of the French military campaign, the withdrawal of French troops, a new election on a nation-wide basis, and a liberal Franco-Syrian treaty, broke up the Cabinet two months later. The nationalist ministers were exiled on charges of complicity in the plots of brigand bands. A new Cabinet was formed of persons whose first desire was the restoration of order.

M. de Jouvenel's failure to achieve an early pacification in Syria proper resulted in his recall before the year was over. Leaving Beirut in May to report at Paris and Geneva, he did not return, but was replaced by M. Henri Ponsot who arrived in Syria in October. No reports on the Ponsot administration are yet available.

#### LEBANON HOLDS ALOOF FROM REBELLION

In Greater Lebanon, which did not join in the rebellion, peaceful elections were held in May and a government was set up under an elected Arab president, Charles Debbas. Here the French authorities proceeded to demonstrate the manner in which they intended to interpret their duties under the terms of the mandate.



## LEAGUE INVESTIGATION OF FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

To the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, the Syrian uprising presented a problem of peculiar difficulty. Charged with the double duty of supervising the mandatory administration and of "assisting the mandatory Governments in carrying out the important and difficult tasks which they are accomplishing on behalf of the League of Nations," it found itself at a loss as to how to handle the Syrian situation. Unable to approve French administrative policies, it yet hesitated to take any action which might make it increasingly difficult for the French authorities to restore order.

A special meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission, postponed from December 1925, when sufficient information on the French administration was not available, was held at Rome (February 16 to March 6, 1926). At this meeting the administrative report for 1924 and a provisional report for 1925 were considered and commented upon, together with a number of petitions from various Syrian sources. The Permanent Mandates Commission scored the French administration on a number of points. It had failed to communicate to the Permanent Mandates Commission the laws and regulations enacted for the governing of Syria—a fact which handicapped the Commission in its attempt to understand the situation. There was insufficient information on both the immediate and the fundamental causes of rebellion. But from the reports available it was evident that there had been a lack of continuity in French administrative policy, which had intensified unrest, and could have been avoided by a more careful preliminary study of the requirements of the Syrian administration. France had placed in Syria a body of officials not sufficiently coherent or experienced. It was owing to latent discontent and the failure of the first French attempts at repression fully as much as to the action of unruly bands and professional agi-

tators that disorder had spread from the Jebel Druze to other parts of Syria.

Syrian nationalists had petitioned for the dispatch to Syria of a neutral commission of inquiry. The Permanent Mandates Commission decided that to do this would so weaken the authority of the French that the cause of pacification would be made doubly difficult. Instead, High Commissioner de Jouvenel was himself charged with the duty of conducting an inquiry into the causes of the rebellion.

## A SPECIAL INQUIRY CONDUCTED

The inquiry was not completed by June when the Permanent Mandates Commission next met, but M. de Jouvenel appeared before it to give an account of his administrative measures and the difficulties he had encountered in carrying them out; and when the Permanent Mandates Commission met again in October the results of the special inquiry were presented to it in three parts. Although the inquiries were conducted by Frenchmen all possible guarantees of impartiality had hedged them about. They were not published by the Permanent Mandates Commission but it was recommended that they be deposited in the League of Nations library and made available there for consultation.

The first report (on political and administrative affairs prior to the Druze outbreak) amply confirmed the opinions of the Permanent Mandates Commission as to the immediate and underlying causes of the Syrian rebellion. The second and third reports discussed the repressive measures adopted by the French authorities. Nothing authorized the Permanent Mandates Commission to report to the Council that these repressive measures, under the abnormal circumstances existing, were excessive. But it hoped that by June, 1927 it might be able to report that the French policy had so ameliorated the situation that there would be no necessity to refer again to certain particularly painful occurrences of the past months.

## TURKEY'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

In both foreign and domestic affairs the past year has been one of kaleidoscopic changes in Turkey. It commenced inauspiciously enough under the shadow of a possible war with Great Britain and Iraq for the possession of Mosul. But before long the whole face of affairs was altered as a result of the threatening attitude of Italy, whom Turkey suspected of designs upon the Adalia region on the southern coast of Asia Minor. Under stress of the Italian menace Turkey agreed in June to cede the greater part of Mosul to Iraq, transferred its troops from the Mosul border to the western part of Anatolia and called two classes to the colors as well as certain reserves. The Turkish government also negotiated with private British firms for the purchase of large quantities of arms and munitions.

About the same time the Turkish press, which rarely publishes anything inimical to the policy of the Angora authorities, began to discuss at some length the advantages of membership in the League of Nations. No formal application for membership was actually made, however, before the year closed.

RUSSO-TURKISH  
NEGOTIATIONS

A good deal of comment was caused in European circles by a conference which took place in November at Odessa between M. Tchitcherin and Tewfik Rushdi Bey, the Russian and Turkish Foreign Ministers, at a time when Chinese, Afghan and Persian delegates were known to be visiting in Turkey or Russia. Excited rumors of a Pan-Asiatic League under the hegemony of Soviet Russia were emphatically repudiated by the Soviet Embassy in Paris, which described the conference as a visit of courtesy paid by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Russian Foreign Minister. No official report of what transpired at the conference was published. The rumors were based on the fact that in February the Turkish National Assembly had ratified a treaty of neutrality and non-aggression with Russia; in April a similar treaty of neutrality and non-aggression had been signed with Persia; and already in 1921 a much more far-reaching

treaty of friendship and cooperation had been negotiated with Afghanistan.

That Turkey's relations with Russia were as a matter of fact not altogether happy was evidenced by the difficulty experienced in concluding a commercial treaty satisfactory to both countries. Negotiations continued without result through the year. Moreover, a temporary trade agreement was interfered with in February 1927, when Moscow withdrew permission for imports to enter Russia from Turkey, on the charge that Greek and Italian goods were being sent through under Turkish labels. A fundamental difficulty in negotiating the treaty was found in the fact that Turkey opposed the principle of state monopoly of foreign trade on which Russia insisted.

Meanwhile the delimitation of the Russo-Turkish boundary proceeded amicably.

FRANCO-TURKISH  
RELATIONS

Incidents on the Turco-Syrian boundary caused the French High Commissioner, M. de Jouvenel, to enter into negotiations with Turkey early in the year. As a result there was concluded on May 30 a convention of amity and friendship between Turkey and France in which provision was made for retracing the Turco-Syrian boundary and for the settlement of disputes by a Commission, an arbitrator, or the Hague Court. This convention was supplemented in December by a Turco-Syrian commercial treaty.

Franco-Turkish relations became strained when in August a French officer was thrown into prison in Constantinople and detained for trial in the case of the sinking of a Turkish ship, which collided with the French steamer *Lotus* in international waters. The Frenchman claimed the right to be tried in a French rather than a Turkish court. France brought strong pressure to bear on the Turkish authorities to release the officer of the *Lotus* but this was not done until after he had been tried and sentenced to a fine in a Turkish court in September. The Franco-Turkish dispute as to jurisdiction in

the case was referred, on Turkey's suggestion, to the Permanent Court of International Justice which has not yet acted.

#### MISCELLANEOUS FOREIGN TREATIES

With Greece, Turkey's relations were less unsatisfactory than formerly. In March, a dispute arose, however, when Greece objected to the Council of the League that the Greco-Turkish Boundary Commission was exceeding its powers in allotting to Turkey certain land to which Greece laid claim at the mouth of the Maritza River. Turkey accepted the League invitation to send a representative to sit with the Council at its March meeting, and substantiated its claim that the Greek demands were excessive. In December a Greco-Turkish agreement was reached whereby abandoned properties of non-exchangeable refugees were to be restored to their former owners, thus putting an end to a controversy which had continued since the end of the war.

A number of additional foreign treaties were concluded or ratified during the year, including among others those with Germany (commerce), Chile (amity and commerce), Bulgaria (amity), China (amity), Hungary (commerce), and Argentina (amity). Negotiations were in progress for commercial treaties with Holland, Sweden and other countries, while treaties with Japan, Mexico and several South American states were projected. With the United States provisional commercial arrangements were renewed pending definite action on the Turco-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce by the United States Senate.\*

#### KEMAL SUPPRESSES OPPOSITION

The most sensational developments of the year in Turkey's domestic history were the discovery in June of a plot to assassinate President Mustapha Kemal Pasha, the mass meetings of protest against the plot which were officially sponsored in many parts of the country, and the drastic measures taken to punish conspirators and to repress oppo-

sition. Of more than eighty suspects, nineteen were condemned to death, eight to life imprisonment and five to banishment. Among those executed were leaders of the former Committee of Union and Progress. The connection of some of these with the assassination plot was acknowledged to be slight but their influence as political opponents of the President was known to be considerable. As a result of the sentences imposed by the Tribunal of Independence in July and August there were no Opposition deputies in the Grand National Assembly when it reconvened on November 1. Opposition to the Kemalists was driven underground. Even verbal indiscretions were liable to cause the arrest of suspected individuals and their trial by the Tribunal of Independence.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

In the twenty-two months of its existence before January 1, 1927, the Tribunal of Independence, a travelling court which dealt with breaches of the peace, had tried 2,351 persons, of whom 948 were condemned to some form of punishment, and 1,237 acquitted. Decisions in the remaining 166 cases (banditry and murder) were held over until 1927. Almost one third of those arraigned were arrested on charges of banditry, and a slightly greater proportion on charges of treason and attempts to overthrow the government.

The Kurdish rebellion of 1925, although broken in June of that year, left behind it in 1926 a problem of pacification which was met by deporting malcontents in Eastern Turkey to various districts in western Anatolia where they were settled in sparsely inhabited localities known to be thoroughly loyal to the Republican régime. One of the last rebel leaders migrated in March to Iraq where with a few thousand followers he settled among his Kurdish kinsfolk.

A new Turkish Civil Code, based largely upon the Swiss Civil Code, went into effect on October 4. It abolished polygamy, extended to women rights of inheritance not formerly possessed by them, gave them equality with men in matrimonial cases, and introduced other far-reaching changes.

\* On January 18, 1927, the U. S. Senate rejected the Turkish Treaty in secret executive session. Admiral Bristol, American High Commissioner at Constantinople, was able, however, to persuade the Turkish authorities to grant an extension of the provisional agreement under which American nationals had enjoyed privileges approximating most-favored-nation treatment.

In December the Province of Trebizond issued a decree forbidding the use of the veil by women on hygienic and economic grounds. Already without the aid of a decree the veil had fast been disappearing in Western Turkey. About the same time the Angora authorities announced that there would soon be inaugurated a system of compulsory education for illiterate Turkish women, who would be given instruction in household economy and hygiene as well as in reading and writing.

Educational statistics for the year 1925-26 showed an enrollment of 37,018 in the government primary schools. This was an increase of 41 per cent over the enrollment of the previous year. Of the 1,217 teachers employed in primary schools, 533 were normal school graduates, 219 had teachers' certificates or were graduated from colleges or secondary schools, 157 had had some education in various types of schools, 97 had had primary school education, 34 were products of the old mosque school, 49 had attended no regular school, and 44 were without diploma of any sort.

Projects for the economic development of the country received an increasing degree of attention. In Constantinople for the en-

couragement of trade the authorities decided in December that a free zone should be established. The opening of a sugar refinery in the Ushak beet district in the same month was vested by government officials with such a degree of ceremony that the event was regarded as one of national significance, being symbolic of a new era of industrial development in Turkey. Railroad building was continued through the year, and in November concessions were granted to Swiss and Belgian concerns for the development of the harbors of Samsun and Mersine and for the construction of railways totalling 930 miles to open up timber and mining areas in Anatolia.

An Aviation League succeeded in collecting considerable funds in support of the growing Turkish air force.

Turkey still suffered from the comparative inexperience of many of its government officials. The administration of some of the government monopolies was notoriously inefficient and galling to native and foreign merchants alike. On the other hand, Turkey was able in spite of overwhelming financial difficulties, to proceed with the development of its natural resources and communications for one more year without having recourse to a foreign loan.

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